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THE
CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
USUALLY KNOWN AS
THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER:

WITH
A DIRECTORY
FOR
THE CELEBRATION OF ORDINANCES,
AND
THE PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERIAL DUTIES.

BELFAST:
THE UNITARIAN REPOSITORY,
28, ARTHUR STREET.
1857.

BELFAST:
ALEX. MAYNE, PRINTER, HIGH STREET.



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THE CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
USUALLY KNOWN AS THE
REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

CHAPTER I.

The Church.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST consists of all persons who acknowledge his divine mission, and who profess to be his disciples and followers.

SECT. 1.—*A Particular Church.*

A particular church consists of a number of persons voluntarily associated (Acts i. 14), and statedly assembling (Heb. x. 22—25), for the worship of God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECT. 2.—*Head of the Church.*

The Lord Jesus Christ, under God, is the sole King and Head of the Church. Matt. xxviii. 18.—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Paul (Eph. i. 22) teaches that Christ “was given of the Father to be head over all things to the church;” and (Matt. xxiii. 8) Jesus himself says, “One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” Jesus again, however, declares (John xviii. 36) that “his kingdom is not of this world,” inasmuch as it does not assume to exercise temporal authority, nor depend for its sanctions upon human wisdom or power. At the same time, whilst his laws are purely spiritual in their sanctions, and addressed to the consciences

of his subjects, they are, nevertheless, evidently designed, and beautifully adapted, to influence, sanctify, and improve all the social institutions of the world.

SECT. 3.—*Teachers and Rulers in the Church.*

Every association must be regulated by certain laws, and its affairs must be conducted by certain officers.

We accordingly find, in relation to the Church, that at the commencement of the Christian dispensation (Eph. iv. 11), the Lord Jesus Christ “gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The apostles, from the nature of their office, which required them to have been witnesses of our Lord’s resurrection (Acts i. 22; 1 Cor. ix. 1), could have no successors. The names “Prophets” and “Evangelists” seem to have been given to persons specially gifted by the Holy Spirit, and we have no evidence that their offices were continued in the Church after the apostolic age.

The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church appear to have been denominated **PRESBYTERS, ELDERS, BISHOPS, PASTORS, TEACHERS, MINISTERS, and DEACONS.**

The names Presbyter, Elder, Bishop, Pastor, Teacher, and Minister, are evidently descriptive of the different duties of the same office, and are, in the New Testament, indiscriminately applied to the same office-bearers, without marking any distinction or superiority of rank.

As the Church became extended, certain grave and experienced members were naturally selected by the believers, to aid the Apostles in the discharge of their duties. Hence the persons so chosen were sometimes denominated *Presbyters*, or *Elders*; again, as exercising an oversight in the Church, they were occasionally called *Bishops*, or *Overseers*; sometimes also, as labouring in word and doctrine, they were styled *Teachers*; as distributing spiritual food to the flock of Christ, they were called *Pastors*; and, finally, as exercising all their functions under the authority of Christ, they were denominated his *Ministers* or servants.

From Acts xx. 17, 28, it is clear that *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were merely two titles for the same office-bearer. Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the *Elders* of the Church, and said unto them, "Take heed of the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *Overseers*"—that is, *Bishops*. Paul also (Titus i. 5—7) directs Titus to "ordain *Elders* in every city," being careful to select men of good character for the office, inasmuch as "a *Bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God."

The Apostle Peter identifies the offices of *Elder*, *Pastor*, and *Bishop*. 1 Peter v. 1, 2—"The *Elders* which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: *feed* the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof."

The Apostles and other Pastors are called *Ministers* and *Teachers*. 1 Cor. iii. 5—"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but *Ministers* by whom ye believed." 1 Tim. iv. 6—"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good *Minister* of Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. ii. 7—"Whereunto I am ordained a Preacher, and an Apostle—a *Teacher* of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

RULING OR LAY ELDERS are appointed in our Churches for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with Ministers. Under the Jewish dispensation, Elders of the people were joined with the Priests and Levites in the government of the Church; and under the dispensation of the Gospel, there are Elders who are helpers to Ministers. Some are spoken of in the New Testament as ruling in the Church, but who take no part in preaching; others, as ruling in the Church, and, at the same time, labouring in the word and doctrine. Thus it is said, "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.) He who is appointed to teach is exhorted "to wait on teaching." He that ruleth in the Church is exhorted to "rule with diligence." (Rom. xii. 7, 8.) Such Ruling Elders are evidently referred to in 1 Cor. xii. 28, under the title of "Helps and Governments."

DEACONS were recognised as distinct office-bearers in the Primitive Church. (Acts vi. 1—8; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8.)

The business of the Deacons was to take care of the poor, and to

distribute among them the collections raised in the congregation for their use. It was their duty to make themselves well acquainted with the situation and character of the poor in their respective districts, and while they relieved their wants by distributing the funds raised in their places of worship, they were to exhort the poor "to seek to be rich in faith, and to become heirs of the kingdom of God."

Ruling Elders in the Presbyterian Church are now generally appointed to take care of the poor, and, consequently, exercise the office formerly held by Deacons. Deacons, as a distinct order, are office-bearers who may or may not be required in particular states of the Church. When not necessary, they may be dispensed with, as was the case at Jerusalem; but when circumstances call for them, they may then be appointed. If the Ruling Elders be able to attend to the poor, the appointment of Deacons is not required or enjoined by the New Testament; for, until the duty became too heavy for the Apostles and their helpers, they had no Deacons at Jerusalem.

SECT. 4.—*Powers of the Teachers and Rulers of the Church in Spiritual Matters.*

The Word of God directs Christians "to know those who labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." (1 Thess. v. 12.) Also, "to obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves." (Heb. xiii. 17.) But this power in teachers, and this submission from the people, do not sanction the teachers to publish any doctrine or prescribe any ceremony upon their own authority, nor require the people to submit to their teachers, except so far as their doctrines and precepts are consistent with the doctrines and laws of Christ, as contained in the New Testament. When the Apostles of our Lord, divinely inspired, and miraculously gifted, were the teachers of the Church, the hearers were not enjoined to believe or obey, even on their authority, but were referred to the Scriptures for proof of their doctrines (Acts xvii. 2), and to Christ himself for the propriety of the rites they prescribed. (1 Cor. xi. 23.) "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say."

The power possessed by the teachers of the Church in all succeeding times, amounts not to more than this—To search the mind of the Spirit speaking in the Scriptures; to produce scriptural authority for the truth of what they teach (Acts xxviii. 23); and to observe those rites, and those only, which Christ has prescribed by his authority, and sanctioned by his example, and which are recorded in his Word. (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

But whilst the teachers and rulers of the Church are not permitted to teach or enjoin anything more than is contained in the Divine Word, they are at the same time bound to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts xx. 27), and, in ruling, to have respect to all the laws which Christ, as “King and Head,” has published for the preservation of purity and order in his Church. They are, therefore, empowered, and it becomes their duty, to exhort, rebuke, or finally exclude from the fellowship or communion of the Church, those members who walk disorderly or renounce the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. (2 Thess. iii. 6—15; Titus iii. 10; Matt. xviii. 15—17; 1 Cor. v. 11—13.)

SECT. 5.—*Right of Private Judgment in the Members of the Church.*

It is the duty, the privilege, and the right of every man to examine the Scriptures for his own instruction and guidance. The Jews were exhorted by our Saviour to “Search the Scriptures.” (John v. 39.) The Bereans were commended by Paul for “searching the Scriptures daily” that they might try the doctrine even of the Apostles. (Acts xvii. 11.) Christians are exhorted to “try the Spirits” (1 John iv. 1); “to prove all things” (1 Thess. v. 21); and Paul declares to them, “I speak as to wise men, *judge* ye what I say.” (1 Cor. x. 15.) As, to his own Master every man stands or falls, so it is every man’s duty to search his Master’s will. (Eph. v. 17.) In the exercise of this right, it is the duty of every Christian to read the Scriptures daily (John v. 39), employing, in cases of difficulty, the aid of pious and learned men who have diligently inquired into the meaning of the Word of God, devoutly praying for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead him into all truth. (Luke xi. 14; John xvi. 13.) It is also his duty to hold conversation and

intercourse with learned teachers and other experienced Christians (Heb. iii. 13), and regularly to attend upon the public preaching of the Word, and other religious ordinances. (Heb. x. 25.) In exercising the inalienable right of his own judgment, the Christian does not refuse to admit light, or receive assistance from his teachers ; he only refuses to acknowledge subjection of conscience to any authority but the Word of God ; and, before he assent to any doctrine, he claims the right of examining the Scriptures for himself, that upon their supreme authority he may rest thoroughly persuaded in his own mind. (Rom. xiv. 5.)

SECT. 6.—*The Right of the Members of every Church to choose their own Teachers and Rulers.*

In the New Testament, we have a record of two remarkable instances of the election and ordination of teachers and rulers, in the primitive Church of Jerusalem.

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that, at the suggestion of Peter, the whole body of disciples, being about the number of one hundred and twenty, “gave forth their lots,” and chose Matthias to be an Apostle, in the room of Judas Iscariot. The other instance is that of the election of the seven deacons. (Acts vi. 3—6.)

The Apostles, though possessed of the gift of discerning spirits, and invested with the highest authority in the Church, took not upon themselves to elect, but directed the multitude of the disciples to look out among them seven men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost ; and when the whole Church had elected proper persons, the Apostles proceeded to ordain by prayer and the laying on of their hands.

This practice of the primitive Church, under the direction and sanction of inspired Apostles, should be the model of the Church in all succeeding ages. When teachers and rulers are to be chosen, it is the absolute right of the members of the Church freely to elect ; and when they have elected qualified persons, it is the right and duty of the teachers to ordain.

SECT. 7.—*Church Courts, or Judicatories.*

The Government of the Presbyterian Church, known as the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, is exercised by Sessions, Presbyteries, and the Synod.

1. A Session consists of the Minister or Ministers, and the lay Elders, of a particular congregation.

2. A Presbytery consists of the Ministers of a convenient district, with a lay Elder from each congregation, appointed by the Session as the representative of the people, to protect their rights, and exercising a co-ordinate authority with the Ministers in all matters brought before the court.

3. The Synod consists of all the Presbyteries thus constituted.

CHAPTER II.

Rules for the Management of Business in Judicatories.

1. Each Judicatory shall be under the superintendence of a President or Moderator, elected (except in the case of Sessions), by the ministers and elders constituting the court.

2. Each Judicatory shall have a Clerk to record its proceedings.

3. Every Clerk, on his first election, shall make the following declaration, viz. :—"I, A. B., being chosen clerk of ———, do hereby publicly and solemnly promise, that I will, to the best of my power and abilities, execute the duties of the office to which I have now been appointed, and that I will faithfully preserve, and when required by this ———, fully restore, the records now committed, or that may hereafter be committed, to my care."

4. Clerks, on receiving a reasonable compensation for their trouble, shall, with the sanction of the body of which they are officers, give extracts from the minutes; and they themselves shall not use any portion of such minutes, without such sanction.

5. Before entering upon important discussions, the following caution shall be given, to which the members of Judicatories are expected to pay due attention :—

"Considering that it is in the name, and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Church Judicatories are assembled and

constituted to attend on the affairs of his house, it is earnestly impressed on all persons now present, that the utmost decorum shall be preserved, both by the members of the court, and those who are admitted as auditors."

6. No person shall direct his remarks on the question under discussion to any but the Moderator.

7. There shall be no whisperings or private conferences, to the interruption of the business of the court.

8. No member shall move any new business till the affair under consideration be issued, or, by resolution of the court, postponed.

9. No member who has spoken once upon a subject, shall have leave to speak again, except for brief explanation, till members who have not spoken thereon shall be heard, if they desire it, after which, the member who first spoke may again address the court.

10. No matter brought before the court by Commissioners and duly investigated, shall be discussed or decided, till said Commissioners shall have withdrawn.

11. The court, if it see fit, may prevent any member from retiring during its proceedings, without leave obtained from the Moderator.

12. Every member has a right by motion, if seconded, to obtain the opinion of the Judicatory thereon.

13. Should any member conceive it inexpedient to discuss the matter, or put it to the vote after it has been discussed, he may, by moving what is technically called "the previous question," ascertain whether the Judicatory do or do not choose to give an opinion on the question. In the event of a motion having been made upon the merits of the subject, any member may move an amendment thereon, but a second amendment shall not be entertained, until the first shall have been disposed of. "The previous question" may be moved on any amendment, as well as on the original motion.

14. Should an amendment be negatived, another may be proposed, but if it be negatived, the original motion shall be immediately put.

15. When a motion or amendment has been proposed, no change of either can take place, without the special leave of the Judicatory.

16. A motion or amendment cannot be withdrawn by the proposer without the leave of the seconder ; but should the seconder withdraw his support, and no other seconder come forward in his place, the motion is thereby lost.

17. When the other members have spoken, either the mover or seconder (but not both), has a right to reply.

18. A member or members have a right to have their simple dissent entered in the minutes, and should they protest, and assign reasons for their dissent, they shall have a right to have their reasons entered on the minutes, provided they be of reasonable length, and expressed in becoming language. The majority, however, should they deem fit, may enter a replication to said protest, under similar restrictions.

CHAPTER III.

SECT. 1.—*The Session or Eldership of a Congregation.*

1. When a Session is to be chosen in a new congregation, the nomination rests with the committee, subject to the approval of the congregation, and ratification of the Presbytery.

2. When new members are to be added to a Session, the nomination rests with the existing Session ; and when a person has been nominated, it is recommended that his name be read publicly, on at least two Lord's-days, immediately before the close of service. If his nomination be acquiesced in by the congregation, he shall be publicly required to signify his acceptance of the office, and his willingness to discharge its duties to the best of his abilities. Having signified his acceptance, he shall be set apart to the office by the minister, in such form and manner as, on consultation with the other members of the Session, he may deem expedient.

It is recommended, however, that the ordination be accompanied by an appropriate religious service. The name of the person appointed shall be recorded in the Session or Committee Book of the congregation, and his induction authenticated by the signature of the pastor.

3. Lay elders should, in all cases, be members in full communion with the congregation in which they are appointed, attendants upon its ordinances, and contributors to its support. They should be men grave, circumspect, and exemplary in their conduct, and held in such estimation as to possess influence among the people.

4. The number of lay elders in a congregation, should be proportionate to its extent ; and it is highly desirable that, if possible, an elder should be resident in each convenient district, so as to be enabled readily and effectively to discharge his duties.

5. It is recommended that each elder shall exercise a special superintendence over his own particular district of the congregation.

6. It is the duty of an elder to stimulate parents to avail themselves of every means of improvement for their children, presented in connexion with their religious society ; to recommend young persons of sufficient age to join in the celebration of the Lord's Supper ; to encourage all to regular and faithful attendance upon the public ordinances of religion ; to endeavour to wake up and keep alive a warm and active interest in the prosperity and welfare of the congregation ; to discountenance every kind of folly and vice, and to promote the cause of genuine and unaffected religion and morality. It is the duty of an elder, so far as he can, without officiously prying into secrets, to keep himself acquainted with the character and conduct of the people in his district, so as to be able to assist the minister in adapting his exhortations and instructions to peculiar circumstances.

7. It is earnestly recommended that elders, when called upon, or when they think it advisable, should visit, converse with, and pray for the sick.

SECT. 2.—*Meetings and Jurisdiction of Session.*

1. It is the duty of the Session to hold regular and stated meetings, for consultation on the religious concerns of the congregation.

2. The minister may of his own choice, and shall, at the request of two lay elders, convene the Session at any time.

3. The minister is *ex-officio* Moderator of the Session : colleagues hold the office alternately : assistants, when the senior minister is absent : and if there be no minister present, the Session shall then appoint their own Chairman.

4. The minister shall not decide any congregational matter by his own authority.

5. All matters intended to be laid before the congregation shall first be submitted to a meeting of Session ; and, should the majority

disapprove, the subject shall not come before the congregation without the sanction of Presbytery.

6. The lay members of the Session duly convened may grant certificates to members going abroad, or passing from one congregation to another : or the minister may grant such certificates himself.

7. The Session have the control of the ordinary Sunday collections ; and should keep an account of their expenditure on the poor, or for other purposes. Out of these collections, the Session shall pay to a supply, on each Sacramental occasion, a sum not less than fifteen shillings. The accounts of the Session should be regularly audited once a year, and left open to the inspection of the congregation.

8. The nomination of a person to be precentor shall originate with the Session and committee, and be afterwards submitted to the congregation. In the event of a poll being demanded, the same qualification, and the same number of votes, shall be requisite for the election of a precentor, as for the election of a minister. The power of dismissing the precentor is vested exclusively in the Session and committee, subject to an appeal to the Presbytery.

9. To the Session belongs the right of appointing any of its own members to sit, deliberate, and vote in Presbyteries and Synods.

CHAPTER IV.

The Committee of a Congregation.

1. The temporal affairs of the congregation are under the care of a Committee, appointed by the stipend-payers ; and who must be chosen from contributors for the support of the minister.

2. As it is evidently injurious to religion that the minister should take any part in the collection of money for his own support, it is the duty of the Committee to let seats and collect the stipend.

3. With the exception of the stipend, and the ordinary Sunday collections, all other monies which may be raised for the benefit of the congregation, are placed under the joint management of the Committee and Session.

4. To the Committee belongs the power of regulating, subject to the approbation of the Presbytery, the number of seat-holders in

each seat. Any individual owing one year's stipend shall forfeit his right of voting in any matter connected with the congregation. In the event of any person owing two years' stipend, he shall be regarded as having ceased to be a member of the congregation, and the Committee may let his seat to another.

The Committee shall submit a settled account of stipend once a year to the Presbytery with which the congregation is connected, which shall be duly entered in the Presbytery Book : such account to be signed by the minister and the treasurer of the congregation. Should such annual account not be forwarded, through any neglect of the minister, the Presbytery, in appointing an assistant or successor, or in settling accounts between the congregation and his heirs, will not take into consideration any arrears that may have accumulated, during any year or years in which a settled account was not submitted.

5. The Committee shall pay to each person supplying a vacant congregation, or a congregation requiring an assistant minister, a sum not less than fifteen shillings, for each Lord's day.

CHAPTER V.

The Presbytery.

SECT. 1.—*Meetings of Presbytery.*

1. Presbyteries are recommended to hold, at least, four stated meetings during the year ; and the Moderator shall be appointed on the first evening of the annual meeting of the Remonstrant Synod, and shall continue in office during the succeeding year.

2. Occasional meetings of Presbytery may be called by the Moderator, in the exercise of his own discretion ; and at the request of any three ministers, he shall convene a meeting, stating in his notice the specific cause and business. Such meetings are not competent to transact business, except the Moderator shall have sent timely notice to all the members of the Presbytery ; nor shall any other Presbyterial business be transacted, but that for which the meeting shall have been specifically called.

3. Any three ministers of a Presbytery, regularly assembled, or any two ministers, with one lay elder, are competent to transact Presbyterial business.

4. Every meeting of Presbytery shall be opened with prayer ; and, at each stated meeting, if there be no candidate for license or ordination prepared to preach, it is desirable that the Moderator or some other member of Presbytery should officiate.

5. The Clerk having called the roll, shall then proceed to read the minutes of the former meeting ; the correctness of which having been confirmed, the Presbytery may then proceed to discuss any new matter coming before them. The Clerk shall take down the minutes as the business proceeds ; and, before the close of the meeting, read over the whole, for observation or correction, and then have them authenticated by the Moderator's signature.

6. Should members from other Presbyteries of the Remonstrant Synod, or members of any Non-Subscribing Church, be present at the meeting of a particular Presbytery, they may be asked to sit and deliberate, but shall not be allowed to vote.

SECT. 2.—*Jurisdiction over Members of Presbytery.*

1. Presbyteries have the superintendence of their own members. When a minister is ordained, a Presbytery may not translate him without his own consent, but he may be occasionally appointed to supply vacancies, assist the ministers of other congregations, or exchange services for the purpose of discipline, unless that he can show that he has some valid previous engagement.

2. The office of the minister being superior to that of the elder, the trial of ministerial faults shall not be before the Session, but before the Presbytery.

3. As a minister is appointed for the instruction and example of the people, and a steward of the manifold grace of God, so it is required that he be apt to teach, blameless in his conduct, and faithful in his office. Should he come short of this character, it is the duty of his brethren to examine his conduct respecting any alleged offence against the divine law, conduct unbecoming the ministerial character, or voluntary neglect of ministerial duties, and to treat his offence as the case may require.

SECT. 3.—*Jurisdiction of Presbyteries over Congregations.*

To the Presbytery belongs the superintendence of all matters connected with the order, prosperity, and religious well-being of the several congregations under their care.

1. To the ministers of the Presbytery belongs the duty of preaching, administering ordinances, and ordaining ministers in vacant congregations.

2. Presbyteries may erect new congregations, in any localities, where, after due consideration and inquiry, such erections may seem to them requisite or desirable.

3. No congregation shall be erected at the first meeting of Presbytery, to which application has been made; but a committee of Presbytery shall be appointed, to inquire into the circumstances, and report at the next meeting.

4. No congregation shall be erected, unless an assurance, satisfactory to the Presbytery, has been offered, of a competent support for the minister.

5. In case of an existing congregation applying to be taken into connexion with a Presbytery, it shall not be received until the circumstances of the case have been duly investigated.

SECT. 4.—*Jurisdiction of Presbyteries over Sessions.*

1. Presbyteries have the right to examine the records of Sessions, to receive appeals against their sentences, and to sustain, modify, or reverse their decisions.

2. It is the duty of Presbyteries to give advice to Ministers and Sessions, in cases of difficulty that may arise in connexion with their respective congregations.

SECT. 5.—*Jurisdiction of Presbyteries over Students.*

To the Presbytery belongs the right of receiving under their care candidates for the ministry, and of superintending and directing their education, judging of their qualifications, putting them on trials, and of licensing them to preach the Gospel.

1. If any student desire to be taken under the care of any Presbytery, in our Churches, to which his minister does not belong, he must obtain a recommendation from his minister, or otherwise satisfy the Presbytery, as to his prudence, piety, and moral character.

2. The student, on being approved, shall receive from the Presbytery a certificate, directed to the entrance examination Committee; and, on returning from college, each session, he shall deliver to his Presbytery, certificates of due attendance on the required classes.

3. Each student shall, during the continuance of his college course, be examined at the August Meeting of Presbytery, in each year, after his return from college, on the subjects he has studied during the session; and in order to ensure an early and continued attention to the sacred Scriptures, every candidate for the ministry shall, on return from college for the first time, be examined on the first five books of the Old Testament; on his return the second time, on the books from Joshua to Job inclusive; on his return the third time, upon the remaining books of the Old Testament; after his return the fourth time, upon the Evangelists and Acts of the Apostles; and on his return the fifth time, on the remainder of the New Testament.

4. To ensure the attendance of examiners, Presbyteries shall, when examinations are appointed, nominate special examiners for the different branches so appointed.

5. Presbyteries should prescribe to their students a course of classical reading during vacation, and direct their attention to civil history, Jewish antiquities, and Bible criticism; and shall require them to give evidence of diligence, by producing essays, and submitting to examinations.

6. Presbyteries may require of all students under their care, specimens of elocution, composition, and devotional exercises; and should receive at least one specimen, in each department, during vacation, from every student under their care.

SECT. 6.—*First Trials of Students.*

1. The Holy Scriptures require that careful trial be made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Word. 2 Tim. ii. 2;

—“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” And though one of the chief qualifications of a minister be his talent for public instruction of the people, yet, the Presbytery are not to rest satisfied with the mere learning of candidates, but are carefully to inquire into their moral and religious character.

2. Students who have studied one session in Hebrew, Theology, and Church History, may be entered upon first trials.

3. The Presbytery shall prescribe to every candidate at least the following trials :—

- (1.) A sermon on a prescribed text.
- (2.) A lecture on some portion of Scripture.
- (3.) A sermon on some controverted point.
- (4.) A commendatory discourse on a prescribed subject.
- (5.) A discourse on some subject to be selected by himself.

4. During his theological course, every student shall be required by the Presbytery to undergo the following examinations :—

1st Examination.—Subject—Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion.

2nd Examination.—Subject—Doctrinal and Controversial Theology.

3rd Examination.—Subject—Church History.

4th Examination.—Subject—Pastoral Theology, and the Original Languages of Scripture.

Instead of the preceding course, Presbyteries may, if they deem it expedient, rest satisfied with the examination and trials prescribed by the Non-subscribing Association of Ireland.

SECT. 7.—*License of Candidates for the Ministry.*

1. When a Presbytery expect to license any candidate at a succeeding meeting, they shall especially appoint a minister to deliver such license in public, in order that a service so important may be conducted in a solemn and effective manner.

2. Presbyteries, before they license a candidate to preach the Gospel, shall satisfy themselves as to his belief in the divine origin

and authority of Christianity. The following questions shall be put:—

“Do you believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe?”

“Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation?”

“Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world?”

“Do you acknowledge your obligation faithfully to endeavour to understand, yourself, and to expound to others, the principles of the religion of Jesus?”

“Do you promise to study, and endeavour to promote, the peace, unity, and prosperity of the Christian Church?”

“Do you promise submission to the authority of this Presbytery, or that of any other Presbytery of this body, with which you may become connected, according to the laws framed for the discipline and government of our Churches?”

3. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and having satisfied the Presbytery of his aptitude for teaching, and moral fitness for the sacred office, the minister appointed to license shall then proceed to do so after the following manner:—

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, and by virtue of that authority which we exercise as a Presbytery, we do hereby license you, A.B., to preach the Gospel; and may the Spirit of the Lord rest upon you, and make you sufficient for the work to which you are appointed.”

4. The Presbytery shall then enter in their book a record of the license.

SECT. 8.—*Probationers.*

1. Probationers may not exercise any of the ministerial functions, except preaching; nor sit as elders in Presbyteries or Synods.

2. Probationers shall not preach in any vacancy, without receiving a due appointment from the Presbytery to which such congregation belongs.

3. Probationers shall not pass from the care of one Presbytery to another, without credentials. Probationers shall not receive creden-

tials, except at a meeting of Presbytery or committee of Presbytery, regularly convened. Credentials must be signed by the Moderator.

4. A probationer from any other church must produce before the Presbytery which he wishes to join, proof of his attendance upon some university or other literary institution, during a period equivalent to that which the Synod prescribes to its own students, before he can be admitted into any Presbytery belonging to the Synod; and, should the Presbytery deem it expedient, they may, previously to his reception, require the applicant to undergo such examinations, and pass such trials as shall satisfy them with regard to his capacity, his attainments, and his aptness to teach.

SECT. 9.—*Supplying Vacancies and Congregations requiring Assistant Ministers.*

1. When a Congregation has become vacant, or a minister shall have obtained leave from the Synod for his congregation to call an assistant, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to take care that the people be supplied with the preaching of the Word, and the administration of Gospel ordinances. For this purpose, congregations may be supplied by ministers or probationers of the Presbytery, or by the ministers and probationers of other Presbyteries, if appointed by the Presbytery to which the congregation belongs; but the probationers or ministers of one Presbytery, shall not be appointed to supply in another, except with the concurrence of the Session and Committee of the congregation to be supplied.

2. When a minister shall have obtained leave for his congregation to choose an assistant, the supplying of the congregation entirely devolves upon the Presbytery; but the Presbytery, should they deem it expedient, may appoint the minister himself to act as supplier, until such assistant shall be appointed.

SECT. 10.—*Registration of Voters in Congregations.*

1. Presbyteries shall instruct the committees of congregations under their care to keep faithful registers of all who contribute to the stipend, with the amount of the respective contributions annexed to each name; and ministers shall direct the respective committees to

keep their registers open for the inspection of members of their congregations, on at least four Lord's-days in each year.

2. Contributors neglecting, after said notice, to apply to the committee, in order to have their names inserted, in the event of their names having been omitted, shall, in no case, be held qualified to vote.

3. Every registry shall state, not only the date when contributors' stipend commenced, but also the day when their names were registered.

4. It is also the duty of the Presbytery, having given due notice to congregations, to send ministers to assist in making out correct copies of their respective registers of contributors; to read them in the meeting-house, before the assembled congregation, attaching to each contributor's name the stipend paid at the death or resignation of the former minister, in case of vacancy, or to the present minister, in case of his requiring an assistant and successor, and to lodge said copy of the register with the Moderator of Presbytery; nor shall any Presbytery appoint any candidate on trials until this regulation shall have been complied with.

5. In making out registers, no person's name shall be entered therein, who is not a seat-holder in the congregation, and a recognised member of the Church in connexion with the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.

6. No seat-holder shall have his name entered as a voter, by the minister making out the poll list, who shall not have held a seat for, at least, twelve months previous to the day of making out said list.

SECT. 11.—*Invitations.*

1. When any members of a congregation which requires a minister, or an assistant minister, wish to hear a candidate upon trials, they shall consult the Session, when assembled upon the Lord's-day; and should the Session concur in their views, the congregation shall be publicly apprised that, upon some specified Lord's-day, the opinion of the seat-holders on the matter will be taken.

2. Should a majority of the elders present refuse to sanction the invitation, the matter shall not be brought before the congregation until the Presbytery shall have given their concurrence.

3. When a congregation is to be polled respecting an invitation,

the Presbytery shall, on their own authority, or on receiving due notice thereof from the Committee or Session, appoint a minister or ministers to preside on the occasion.

4. On the day specified, being either the Lord's-day, or any other day of the week, the officiating minister or ministers shall take the votes of the seat-holders ; and, should more than the half of the contributors present vote for the invitation, it shall be read in the meeting-house, signed by the session-clerk, and transmitted to the Presbytery, requesting them to obtain for the congregation a hearing of the candidate. If the candidate be a probationer, it is recommended that he should preach on trials not less than four Lord's-days. But provided the congregation have already heard the candidate, or been otherwise satisfied of his fitness, whether he be a probationer or placed minister, they may apply to the Presbytery forthwith to draw up a call.

5. When a congregation applies to the Presbytery, to obtain them a hearing of any candidate, they shall then inform the Presbytery what sum of stipend they intend to pay for the support of their future minister.

6. That it shall be competent for any congregation, at any time, by a vote of a Synodical majority, to dispense with the services of its minister ; such vote to be taken by a committee of Presbytery duly appointed for the purpose, on application from the Committee and Session of the congregation ; the minister having the right of appeal.

SECT. 12.—*Polls.*

In conducting of polls the following rules shall be observed :—

1. The Presbytery shall appoint one member or more to poll the congregation. It is recommended, if a division be expected, that the poll shall not be taken on the Lord's-day.

2. The member or members so appointed, shall, after prayer, call upon the congregation to appoint two or more tellers of the votes.

3. If a poll be demanded, the voters' list shall be called, and the name of each voter, and the amount of his stipend, noted by the tellers.

4. None but seat-holders of twelve months' standing, contributing to the stipend, and entered in the stipend list, shall be qualified to vote. This rule is not to apply to new congregations.

5. Every voter must be clear of stipend up to the accustomed annual or half-yearly period of settling the stipend, immediately preceding the poll.

6. To avoid confusion, no payment of stipend made after the lodgment of the list, shall be held as qualifying to vote ; nor shall any person be qualified to vote, whose name has not been duly entered on the list of voters.

7. If it appear that two-thirds of the votes, and two-thirds of the stipend of all the voters polled, are in favour of the candidate, the presiding minister or ministers shall draw up a call, and see it signed in the meeting-house.

8. In case there be neither protest nor appeal, and the candidate belong to their own Presbytery, the presiding minister or ministers shall forward the call, and appoint him constant supplier.

9. If the candidate belong to another Presbytery, and there be neither protest nor appeal, the presiding minister or ministers shall forward the call to said Presbytery, requesting that the call be recommended for consideration to the person elected, and that he be returned to them with credentials.

10. In case there be either protest or appeal, the call shall be submitted to the Presbytery to which the congregation belongs, the appellants shall have notice to attend, and the presiding ministers shall report to the Presbytery. If the Presbytery sustain the call, they shall present it to the candidate elected, if under their own care ; or forward it to the Presbytery to which the candidate belongs, requesting that it be recommended to his consideration, and that he be returned with credentials, so that he may be appointed constant supplier of the congregation.

11. Should a congregation desire the re-hearing of a candidate, who had formerly declined a poll, or who, on a poll, had not a synodical majority, the Presbytery shall not grant, in any case, such a re-hearing, or a new poll, without the consent of, at least, two-thirds of the qualified voters, ascertained in the same manner as in the case of an original invitation.

12. A call shall be in the manner following :—

“ To the ————.

“ We, the session and congregation of ————, having heard a good report of you, and being fully satisfied of your capacity to be our spiritual teacher, do hereby call and request you to undertake the work of the Gospel ministry amongst us ; and, should you be settled amongst us, we promise duly to consider your instructions, to respect you for your work's sake, to pay for your support ———— per annum of stipend, and to submit to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church, in connexion with the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.

“ Dated and signed in our Meeting-house,
this ———— of ————.”

[Here follow the signatures of the members of the congregation.]

“ We do hereby certify that we presided, by presbyterial appointment, at a poll in the congregation of ————, for ————, and that the poll stood thus ———— ; and that we did, therefore, according to synodical rule, declare ———— duly elected ; and that we were present at the signing of the call. ”

“ A. B., or { A. B. } Minister [or Ministers] of the Presbytery
 { C. D. } of ————.”

13. A candidate may take into consideration a plurality of calls ; but he shall not be put upon second trials, until he shall have returned them all except one.

14. The stipend commences the day the call is presented ; the candidate paying all supplies from that date.

SECT. 13.—*Second Trials.*

1. When a candidate has been appointed constant supplier, the Presbytery may, if they see fit, place him upon a course of second trials ; and, in the event of his not having been previously the stated minister of a congregation, it is recommended that he shall submit to the Presbytery forms for the celebration of baptism and of marriage. At the close of his second trials, or previously to fixing the day for his ordination, the candidate shall be required distinctly to state his final acceptance of the call.

SECT. 14.—*Ordination.*

1. No ordination shall be appointed without the consent of two-thirds of the Presbytery, regularly assembled.

2. When the Presbytery has fixed the time for an ordination, a minister shall be sent to announce the matter to the congregation, at least eight clear days before the day so appointed. The form of the announcement shall be as follows :—

“The Presbytery having been applied to by this congregation to appoint A. B. to be their minister, I do hereby, in the name of the Presbytery, announce that they have fixed the _____ of _____ as the day for his ordination [or installation]; that if any members of this congregation who voted for the call, entertain objections to the life, doctrine, or ministrations of the said A. B., they shall distinctly place such objections, in writing, in the hands of the Moderator of the Presbytery, within two days from this date, so that the validity of such objections may be duly considered, before the ordination [or installation]. I do farther announce, that any person, having pecuniary claims against the congregation, is hereby required to lodge a statement of the same with the Moderator or presbytery-clerk, before the day of ordination, otherwise the Presbytery will not, at any future period, take said claims into consideration.”

A. B., Officiating Minister.

The above notice to be duly handed to the session-clerk, or to the chairman of committee.

3. Before ordination, the Presbytery shall take care that all debts due by the congregation to minister, minister's executors, or suppliers of the congregation, be duly settled. If any proper claim remain unpaid, or without any adequate security for its liquidation in reasonable time, the Presbytery may postpone the ordination.

4. Should any three or more ministers of a Presbytery lodge with the Moderator or clerk, a protest, eight clear days before the day appointed for an ordination; or should any three or more ministers protest against an ordination on the day appointed, grounding their protest upon something that did not come to their knowledge till within the eight days, it shall not take place, but the case be reported to the Synod. Should the cause of protest appear to the Synod

frivolous and vexatious, the members so protesting shall be subject to censure and suspension.

5. The day of ordination being definitely fixed, the Presbytery shall appoint members to preach, to discourse of ordination, to offer up the ordination prayer, and to deliver the charge to minister and people. It is desirable that the persons appointed to these duties should be the senior and more experienced members of Presbytery.

6. After the discourse concerning ordination, the following questions shall be asked :—

“Do you believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe?”

“Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation?”

“Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world?”

“Do you acknowledge your obligation faithfully to endeavour to understand, yourself, and to expound to others, the principles of the religion of Jesus?”

7. The preceding questions having been answered in the affirmative, the officiating minister shall then address the candidate for ordination [or installation], in these words :—

“Do you desire, for your own satisfaction, or that of the members of this congregation, here assembled, to say anything farther, with regard to your views of Christian doctrine, or to make any statement, in relation to your purposes, in entering upon the solemn work of the Gospel ministry?”

Here the candidate, if so disposed, is to make his statement.

Should the candidate make a statement, the officiating minister shall farther address him, saying :—

“You have now made a good profession, before many witnesses, and I feel persuaded that it has been made in perfect sincerity and good faith, and it is now my duty to inquire of you whether you solemnly engage, that you will give yourself, with all the ability with which the Lord shall bless you, and with all the diligence which the importance and responsibility of your office demand, to the work of the ministry amongst this people—that you will honestly endeavour to understand, and faithfully labour to expound to others, the principles of our holy religion—that you will duly administer the ordi-

nances of the Gospel—that you will regularly visit your people, from house to house, and duly instruct the young—that you will affectionately administer consolation in the house of mourning—and that you will carefully endeavour to perform any other duties, which a sense of your own responsibility, and the condition of your people, may seem to require?”

“Do you approve of Presbyterian government and discipline, as it is recognised in the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster; and do you promise to submit yourself thereto, and support it to the extent of your abilities, so long as you shall remain in connexion with that body?”

“Do you promise, as far as in you lies, faithfully to discharge all your duties as a member of this Presbytery, and to fulfil its appointments?”

8. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, shall be ordained to the ministerial office by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.

The candidate reverently kneeling, the officiating minister shall offer up prayer to the following effect:—

“Adoring God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; thanking him for all the blessings which he has bestowed upon the children of men; especially for his unspeakable goodness, in sending his Son into the world to save sinners, by leading them to repentance and newness of life; for the doctrines which Jesus taught; for his perfect example; his submission to the death of the cross; his resurrection from the dead; his ascension into heaven; his promises of spiritual blessings to his faithful followers in all ages; his appointment of apostles, prophets, and teachers, for the gathering of his people, and the edification of his church; and for the promise of his constant intercession at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on High.”

At some part of such prayer, the officiating minister and the other ministers present shall lay their hands upon the head of the candidate, as Paul states Timothy was ordained by “the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14.)

The officiating minister shall then implore God to bless his servant with faithfulness, diligence, zeal, purity, and all other qualities necessary to his office. He shall also entreat a blessing upon the people

who are to be placed under his care, that they may receive with meekness the ingrafted word, and obey it as the counsel of God for salvation.

The prayer being finished, the presiding minister shall give the right hand of fellowship to his newly-appointed brother ; the rest of the ministers shall do likewise ; and, afterwards, the people may offer their friendly congratulations.

9. A charge to the minister and people shall then be delivered, setting forth the duties of each, and exhorting them to discharge those duties with fidelity, diligence, and charity.

The solemn services of the day shall then be concluded by singing an appropriate hymn, by a short prayer, and an apostolical benediction.

SECT. 15.—*Installation.*

If a congregation make application to a Presbytery to have an ordained minister settled amongst them,—in ascertaining the minds of the people, taking of the poll, signing and forwarding the call, in serving the notice of instalment, and in the settlement of congregational accounts, the same rules shall be observed as those already laid down for ordinations. The same questions, also, shall be put to the person to be installed, as to one about to be ordained ; a similar charge shall be delivered to minister and people, and all other rules observed as in the case of ordination, except those which refer to the mere act of ordination, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.

SECT. 16.—*Resignation.*

1. When a minister has been settled in a congregation, he may not resign his pastoral charge without consent of the Presbytery.

2. When any Minister shall have filled the office of Pastor, in one or more congregations, for the period of 40 years, he may require the Presbytery to direct his congregation to choose an Assistant, and intended Successor to him. Otherwise, should he resign without consent of Presbytery, he shall not be entitled to receive any stipend, or arrears of stipend, which may be due to him by the congregation.

SECT. 17.—*Marriage.*

When a minister is ordained, he acquires a legal right to celebrate marriage.

Our forefathers in the ministry, who were regular members of the Church of Scotland, invited to Ireland by the Government, and endowed with Church livings, and all the usual rights and privileges of ministers, exercised the same right of marrying in Ireland which they had previously exercised in Scotland. The right of celebrating marriage, therefore, comes down to our ministers, confirmed by the strongest of all human laws, universal custom. In addition to the principle of custom, however, that right is secured by an Act of Parliament, passed in the year 1844, entitled, “An Act for Marriages in Ireland, and for Registering such Marriages.”

Ministers are enjoined carefully to study and carry out the provisions of this Act; but in addition to such due attention to legal requirements, the following laws of this Synod, respecting the celebration of marriages, must also be observed, to prevent, as far as possible, any marriage from being celebrated which, though not illegal, might be unsuitable or improper in itself:—

1. No minister shall join in marriage any parties under age, without attending to the provisions of the Marriage Act, sect. 20. And even if the parties, having attained full age, continue to reside with their parents, or to be under the care of guardians, it will be still desirable that the minister should, as soon as possible, notify such contemplated marriage to said parents or guardians.

2. It is desirable that no minister shall join in marriage, with a member of his own congregation, any hearer, being a minor, or another minister of this Synod, without a certificate to the following effect:—

“I do hereby certify that _____ is an unmarried person; a regular member of the congregation of _____; and that, having made due inquiry of his or her parents or guardians, (as the case may be), their consent has been given for his or her marriage with _____, of the congregation of _____, by the Rev. A. B., minister of _____.”

(Signed) C. D., Minister of _____.

3. No minister shall join in marriage any couple, except at least one of the parties belong to his own congregation. This rule to be understood with the following exceptions :—1st. In case of a vacant congregation, when the parties are duly certified by a member of Session. 2nd. In case of the absence, sickness, or special request of another minister ; the parties, in case of absence of the minister, being duly certified by a member of Session.

4. No member of the Synod, not having a particular pastoral charge, shall join any parties in marriage, without the consent of the minister in whose meeting-house the marriage is to be celebrated.

No degraded minister, nor minister suspended *sine die*, nor probationer, is entitled to celebrate marriage.

SECT. 18.—*Registers of Baptism.*

1. As it is often of great consequence to individuals to be able to prove the time and place of their baptism, it is the duty of ministers to keep a registry of the children they baptize, stating the dates of their birth and baptism, the father's name, residence, and occupation ; and, for the sake of greater distinctness, the mother's maiden name.

2. The registry books of baptism should be purchased by the congregation, be the property of the people, be kept under the charge of the minister, or in case of vacancy, under the care of the session-clerk.

3. The pastoral charge of a minister extending only to his own congregation, he shall not baptize the children of members of other congregations, without permission or request from the ministers, or in case of a minister's absence, or the vacancy of a congregation, without a request from an elder.

SECT. 19.—*Occasional Visitation.*

1. As a minister, when ordained, receives a particular charge of his congregation, so it is to be expected that he will diligently, laboriously, and faithfully perform, to the utmost of his ability, his own duties. In the event of his temporary absence, however, or any

other valid reason, causing him to employ others to officiate for him, it is expected that he shall give special attention to the character and qualifications of those employed.

2. As the Remonstrant Synod does not recognise the right of any man taking upon himself the office of a minister in its church, it strictly enjoins its members to pay special regard to the qualifications and characters of those who may not be its own ministers or licentiates, previously to their being permitted to officiate for any minister of this body.

3. This Synod, therefore, enacts that no minister shall employ any person to officiate for him (its own ministers or licentiates excepted), contrary to the expressed wish of his Session.

4. Any minister of this Church employing any person to preach for him (the ministers and licentiates of this body excepted), contrary to the advice of his Presbytery, shall, for the first offence be admonished, and for the second, suspended at the discretion of the Presbytery.

SECT. 20.—*Visitation Presbyteries.*

For the promotion of zeal, order, and discipline in the congregations within our bounds, in relation to the duties both of ministers and people, the Presbyteries shall hold regular stated visitations of the several Churches under their care, in addition to other occasional visitations, which special circumstances in any congregation may render expedient.

In their annual report to Synod, each Presbytery shall state the number of visitations held during the preceding year, and make any remarks connected therewith, which they may consider profitable.

1. One of the four regular meetings of Presbytery, each year, shall be visitation; and it is earnestly recommended that there shall be two visitations each year. Where circumstances do not require the order to be changed, it may be in alphabetical congregational succession.

2. When a congregation is to be visited, the Presbytery shall direct the minister, or some other member of Presbytery, to give the congregation at least one week's public notice, with regard to

the nature and object of the visitation. The officiating minister shall also take care that two members be appointed—one by the Session, and one by the Committee—to represent the people before the Presbytery.

3. The Presbytery shall appoint either the Moderator, or some senior minister, to put the following inquiries to the minister and commissioners of the congregation.

TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

1. "Does your minister, as you believe, conduct the services of this church, and administer its ordinances in a becoming manner?"

2. "Does he make, in your opinion, reasonable preparation for the Lord's-day services?"

3. "Does he, when called upon, duly visit the sick and the afflicted?"

4. "Does he visit his congregation in general once a year, or at what times does he visit?"

5. "Does he, in your mind, give reasonable instruction to the children, and other young persons of the congregation, and especially to those who purpose to approach, for the first time, the Lord's table?"

6. "What is the average amount of Sunday collections, and how is the amount applied?"

7. "Can you submit a statement of their amount and application for the last twelve months?"

8. "Besides the Sunday collections, are there any funds for the relief of the poor; and if there be, can you submit a statement of their amount and application?"

9. "Has this congregation been increasing or decreasing as to numbers and general prosperity?"

10. "What is the state of the congregation, as to its pecuniary affairs?"

11. "What is the amount of stipend assessed on your meeting-house?"

12. "What has been the amount of stipend annually paid for the last five years?"

13. "What is the number of stipend payers in this congregation?"

14. "Are there any arrears; and if so, what amount, due your minister at November last?"

15. "Can you exhibit or state the stipend accounts of the congregation?"

16. "What properties, if any, belong to the congregation?"

17. "Can you mention the tenure of your properties, and the amount expended for the support and repairs of your meeting-house, or other congregational objects?"

18. "Do you desire to state any thing to this Presbytery, with regard to what you believe might conduce to the advancement of religion amongst you, and the increase and prosperity of this worshipping society?"

TO THE MINISTER.

1. "Do you wish to say anything with regard to the state of religion in this congregation?"—

2. "What is the average attendance on your Lord's-day services?"

3. "Is it on the increase or decline?"

4. "What is the number of families, or of individuals, in connexion with this congregation, for whom you perform pastoral duty?"

5. "What is the average number of communicants?"

6. "Do you examine and instruct young communicants?"

7. "How are the people supplied with the Scriptures?—and is any library attached to the vestry of the congregation?"

8. "What is the state of education as to daily and Sunday Schools?"

9. "What is the state of psalmody?"

10. "Do you wish to make any additional statement to this Presbytery, on any matter which you conceive calculated to benefit this Christian society?"

These questions having been answered, no member of Presbytery shall make any additional inquiry, without having previously obtained the concurrence of the Presbytery. The Presbytery may then, if necessary, meet interlocutory, to settle the advice which it may be right to give. They shall close the visitation, by directing one of their members to address the minister, elders, committee, and people, and give them such advice as circumstances may seem to require.

CHAPTER VI.

*The Synod.*SECT. 1.—*Powers of the Synod.*

The Synod, being an aggregate of Presbyteries, may be considered as the common council of the Church, and entitled, consequently, to exercise final jurisdiction in all matters connected with the regulation and well-being of our Churches.

The following powers belong to the Synod :—

1. To the Synod is reserved the power of regulating the number and extent of the several Presbyteries under its care ; and of removing congregations and ministers from one Presbytery to another ; but the Synod does not possess the power to remove a congregation or minister from one Presbytery to another, except at the request of both minister and congregation, or of the congregation, if it be vacant.

2. To the Synod belongs the right of restoring ministers suspended *sine die*, or degraded ; likewise of restoring probationers, from whom license has been withdrawn.

3. To the Synod belongs the power of reviewing the conduct and sentences of Presbyteries, by reference, appeal, or the inspection of their records, when inquiry into any of their proceedings shall be demanded.

4. When a case has been referred by a Presbytery to Synod, or when it shall appear to Synod that the Presbytery have been unreasonably slow in deciding any case, the Synod may remove it from before the Presbytery, determine it forthwith, or deliver it over to a commission.

5. In all cases when an appeal has been lodged, by the whole, or a part of a congregation, against the sentence of a Presbytery, the Synod shall put the congregation under the care of a committee.

6. In all cases of appeal, the Synod observes the rules relative to appeal in the form of proceeding in cases of scandal, as hereinafter contained.

7. When a motion of inquiry is intended to be made at an approaching meeting of Synod, respecting any act done by a Presbytery previous to the preceding meeting of Synod, notice must be given to the Presbytery, at least three months before the time of

Synod's meeting, so that the Presbytery may have time to prepare for explanation and defence.

8. The Synod exercises the right of reconsidering its own acts, subject to the following rules, viz :—

When a motion of inquiry into any act of the Synod is made, by a party not affected by the decision, the notice must be given at the meeting of one year, and the review lie over till the meeting of next year.

But provided a party, in a case upon which the Synod has already decided, seek to have it re-heard, he may bring it into Synod, by memorial through his Presbytery, and the Committee of Bills; but such cases shall never be tried by the Synod, unless the existence of new evidence shall have been satisfactorily shown.

9. The Synod may appoint a Commission of its members, either to investigate and report on, or finally to issue, any particular case; but, in the event of a commission being appointed finally to decide any matter, it shall not afterwards be reviewed, amended, or reversed, provided two-thirds of the members of such Commission have agreed in their decision.

10. A Commission of Synod, appointed to try a particular case, may adjourn from day to day; but having decided and separated, they shall not again meet to re-hear the case. Meetings may, in particular circumstances, be interlocutory; but in all cases, the final discussion and decision shall be public.

11. When a commission of Synod is to be chosen, each Presbytery shall elect a minister and an elder, for every three congregations it contains. No Presbytery appealed against shall appoint any of its own ministers or elders to sit on the Commission; but all its members may attend, explain, and discuss, without, however, in any case, being allowed to vote.

12. As the Synod exercises a superintendence over all the churches under its care, it possesses the power of appointing a Commission of visitation, to any congregation or congregations, when there appears reasonable evidence that such visitation may prove beneficial.

SECT. 2.—*Mode of Conducting Synodical Business.*

1. The Moderator of the former Synod having conducted an entire religious service, shall desire the Clerk to call the roll of the

several Presbyteries. Presbyteries, at different meetings, shall be called first in turn.

2. Elders from vacant congregations, or those whose ministers do not attend, shall then be called on for their commissions, which shall be in the following words, viz :—

“It is hereby certified, that ——— is an elder in the congregation of ———, appointed and registered according to the regulations of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, and that, at a stated meeting of the Session of ———, said ——— was chosen to attend a meeting of the Remonstrant Synod to be held at ———, upon ———, and during its continuance, to sit, deliberate, and vote.

“A. B., *Minister* [*or Officiating Minister*].

“C. D., *Session Clerk*.”

3. The roll having been made out, the Moderator shall propose that a successor be chosen, and each Presbytery shall then have the right of nominating either one of its own members, or a member of any other Presbytery, as a candidate for the Moderatorship. In the event of no person being so nominated, any minister or elder may propose a candidate. A lay elder may be appointed Moderator, but, in such case, he shall be required to provide some minister of the body to officiate at the opening of the next annual meeting of Synod.

4. The candidate, who must be elected by a majority of the whole votes given, shall immediately take the chair, and, if he think fit, he may address the brethren.

5. The Moderator opens the Synod each day with prayer, and dismisses with the benediction.

6. He presides in the meetings, and enforces the rules for regulating discussions.

7. He has power to convene the Synod's Fixed Committee, and, with the sanction of the Fixed Committee, to call *pro re nata* meetings of Synod.

8. After the appointment of the Moderator, the Synod shall immediately proceed to elect a Clerk, in the same way that they chose the Moderator.

9. After the election of a Clerk, the first business of the Synod is to determine upon the place of its next annual meeting.

10. The Clerk shall then proceed to read the following general order to Presbyteries :—

“Ordered,—That the Presbyteries constituting this Church do meet, during the course of this evening, or early to-morrow morning, and severally prepare a written statement of the following particulars, or of such of them as there may be ground for reporting :—

(1.) “The names and post-office addresses of their respective Moderators for the next twelve months :

(2.) “The names and situations of any new congregations which they may have erected since the last annual meeting of Synod :

(3.) “The names of any ministers connected with them, who, during the same period of time, may have resigned their pastoral charges, and of those who may have died, been ordained or installed :

(4.) “The names of any candidates for the clerical office, whom they have licensed to preach, or have entered upon trials ; and of any students recently returned from college, whom they have examined,—specifying the number of sessions which each student has completed :

(5.) “The widows and families entitled to the benefit of the fund, whose husbands or fathers were, at the period of their decease, members of the Presbytery :

(6.) “The name of any minister belonging to them, who may have obtained leave for his congregation to choose an assistant and intended successor to him, in the discharge of his pastoral duties :

(7.) “Their respective delegates for the Committees of Overtures, Bills, Books, and Synod’s Fixed Committee :

(8.) “The name and address of each Licentiate under their care :

(9.) “The number of meetings they have held during the past year, whether ordinary, or visitation :

(10.) “Any other circumstances, which the Presbytery may deem it expedient to state to the Synod.”

The foregoing particulars shall be detailed according to the order in which they are mentioned.

11. At the second *sederunt* of Synod, the reports of the several Presbyteries shall be received, and, so far as may be necessary, discussed.

12. The clerk shall then make out a roll of the regular committees of Synod, from the reports of the several Presbyteries ; and the

Moderator shall announce the time at which these committees shall meet for the transaction of business.

13. *The Committee of Overtures.*—The duty of this committee is to consider all matters, which are to be brought for the first time before the Synod.

(1.) All members of Synod are entitled to take part in the discussions of the committee, but not to vote. (2.) Should any objection be made to the introduction of a minister of another religious body, to sit and deliberate in the Synod, the question of his admission shall be decided by the committee. (3.) Should the committee refuse to license any overture, it may, nevertheless be brought before the Synod, in the following manner:—Motion may be made that all persons, not members of the Synod, shall be required to retire; so that the introduction of the proposed overture may be sanctioned or rejected, by the regular ministers and elders of the court. This, however, should never be done, but from weighty reasons; and if a member moving for such interlocutor, shall fail to convince the Synod of the propriety of his motion, he may be censured for interrupting the proceedings of the Synod, in opposition to the decision of the committee. (4.) No member shall be permitted to enter notice of a future motion upon the minutes of Synod, without first obtaining the sanction of this committee. (5.) If the committee lay before the Synod an overture declarative of the established practice and laws of the Synod, it shall, on passing the Synod, immediately be binding; but any overture on a new subject, if it be opposed by one third, at least, of the members present, shall be on the Synod's books at least one year before it shall be discussed. (6.) The Committee of Overtures possesses the privilege of placing upon the minutes, suggestions for advancing the interests of religion in the Church, to be considered at the subsequent annual meeting of the Synod.

14. *Committee of Bills.*—The duty of this committee shall be to examine all appeals, memorials, letters, and other documents designed to be laid before the Synod.

(1.) Bills sanctioned by the committee may be immediately considered; but, if rejected, they can only be brought before the Synod, under the same regulations as apply to a rejected overture. (2.) Should a document contain anything irrelevant or unbecoming,

the committee may remonstrate with the party presenting it, and recommend the omission of the objectionable portion; but, should this recommendation prove unavailing, they may reject the document altogether. (3.) Should the committee consider any bill as containing matter not coming properly under ecclesiastical cognizance, they may reject it; and they ought to reject all bills irregularly placed before them, as in the case of a matter being proposed to be at once placed before the Synod, which should first have come before a congregation, committee, Session, or Presbytery. (4.) This committee shall in no case present a bill containing an appeal or complaint, except the memorialist, or a person regularly commissioned by him in writing to act for him, shall personally attend to acknowledge the document, and afford explanations. (5.) Memorials from an established congregation, or part of an established congregation, must, in ordinary cases, be read in their own meeting-house, and licensed by the Presbytery to which they belong; but should the memorial complain of the conduct of a Presbytery, and should the Presbytery complained against refuse to license it, the memorialist may apply to the Committee of Bills, who are empowered and enjoined to inquire into the case and redress the injury, by reporting, if they see cause, the refusal to the Synod. Memorials from persons not under the care of any Presbytery of the Synod, come directly, without license of a Presbytery, to the Committee of Bills.

15. *Committee of Books.*—The duty of this committee is to inspect Presbyterial and Synodical records and documents.

(1.) The clerk of each Presbytery shall produce to this committee, the book containing the minutes for the last year. (2.) Any clerk failing to produce or send the Presbytery Book, shall, for the first neglect, be admonished; and for a second, or any subsequent neglect, he may be suspended from the clerkship during the pleasure of the Synod. (3.) The committee shall particularly examine the rolls of each meeting of the several Presbyteries during the past year; return to the Synod the names of those members, who have been always, or generally absent, without assigning sufficient cause; and, finally, make any remarks on the state of the records, which they may consider likely to be advantageous.

16. *College Entrance Examination Committee.*—Whereas it is to be lamented that Presbyteries have sometimes allowed students to

enter college, who were not sufficiently qualified ; and whereas it must be acknowledged, that for want of having a solid foundation laid by an adequate school education, youths of naturally good abilities have been, in consequence, in a considerable degree disqualified from making due progress in their after studies ; and, whereas, it is to be lamented that students have occasionally, after passing through a few years' attendance at college, been allowed to proceed on Presbyterial trials, even when their imperfect qualifications have become known to those who neglected to stop them in time, and who plead in favour of their license, a regard to the feelings of their relatives, and to the time spent, and the expense already incurred, in their education ; and whereas there is reason to fear that the evils referred to may be, in some degree, attributable to the partiality of ministers to young persons brought up under their own care, or the fear of giving offence to their parents and friends, by what might be deemed over-strictness in their early examinations ; therefore, as a remedy, it is enacted that students intended for the ministry, shall, before being allowed to enter college, be required to pass satisfactorily before the committee an Examination,

Either on the subjects prescribed for Entrance Examinations, in Trinity Collège, Dublin ; or—

On the subjects prescribed for Matriculation Examination, by the Queen's Colleges in Ireland.

17. Any student who commenced his studies, without a view to the ministry, may afterwards become a candidate, on receiving the sanction of a Presbytery, and submitting his college certificates, and testimonials of character, to the Examination Committee ; who shall subject him to such examinations as would have been required, if he had entered college and pursued his studies, under the care of a Presbytery of this Synod. Thenceforth he shall go through the same courses of studies, examinations, and trials, which are required from students of equal standing in our Church.

18. Students from other religious bodies shall, after having satisfied a Presbytery as to their motives in desiring to join this Synod, submit themselves to the Committee of Examination, in the same manner, and under the same regulations, as students who have not commenced their studies with a view to the office of the ministry amongst us.

19. No student shall be licensed by this Church to preach the Gospel, without producing to the Presbytery with which he is connected, a degree of A. B. or A. M. from some university, or a certificate from the Examination Committee, that he has duly passed through the course of examinations, which, in certain cases, the Non-Subscribing Association of Ireland have agreed to accept as equivalent to a Degree in Arts.

20. *Fixed Committee.*—(1.) This committee consists of two ministers, and two elders from each Presbytery, together with the Moderator, and Clerk of Synod. They shall assemble, if required by any business of urgency or great importance, which may occur between one meeting of Synod and another, on being summoned by the Moderator ; or on the requisition of any three ministers of this Church. Five members to be a quorum ; of whom three at least must be ministers. On calling this committee, the Moderator, or the three ministers who may convoke it, shall distinctly state the specific business for its consideration.

(2.) The duties of the Fixed Committee are chiefly limited to matters pertaining to our civil rights ; our ecclesiastical privileges in connexion with the State ; and the security of our congregational properties of all kinds. The Fixed Committee may, therefore, should they deem it expedient, present addresses to the Lord Lieutenant, send deputations or statements to Government, on any subjects affecting our temporal interests or religious rights, and give, when called upon, advice and support to congregations, in relation to their ecclesiastical properties.

(3.) In the event of differences occurring in a congregation, with regard to the settlement of a minister, or any other matters, seriously affecting its peace and prosperity, the Fixed Committee shall, on being specially convened, call a *pro re nata* meeting of Synod, for the final adjustment of such affairs.

(4.) It is desirable to appoint on this committee, the experienced members of Presbyteries.

21. *Other Committees.*—In addition to the foregoing, which may be considered as the regular standing committees of the Church, Presbyteries or Synod may appoint committees, with full powers to consider and issue any subjects which may have been specially

brought before them, or which may arise during the course of their Presbyterian or Synodical proceedings.

The Synod having finished the discussion of Presbyterian reports, proceed to read the minutes of the last annual meeting, and to discuss and decide such questions arising out of them, as have been left undetermined.

But no decision of the past year shall again be brought under discussion, otherwise than as directed in the rule respecting motion of inquiry into an act of the Synod.

The reading of the past year's minutes being finished, the reports, if any, of the stated committees of Synod shall be received. The report of any special committee shall be given in, when the minute of its appointment is read.

Should a member desire to bring any subject, not coming clearly under the business of any committee, before the body, either for the purpose of giving information or seeking advice, he may do so, on obtaining permission of the Moderator.

At every new session, the clerk reads the minutes of the preceding session, that the Synod may be satisfied of their correctness ; but at the second reading, no new discussion of them shall take place.

22. Attendance of Ministers and Elders at Meetings of Synod.—

(1.) In order to secure a full and regular attendance of ministers at every meeting of Synod, regular and special, the clerk of Synod shall hand to the clerk of each Presbytery the names of absent ministers, whom the said Presbyterian clerk shall specially summon to attend the next meeting of Presbytery, at which, unless each said absent minister shall assign reasonable and substantial cause for his inattention to duty, he shall be publicly admonished. In the event of such minister being again absent, without assigning satisfactory reasons to Synod, in writing, he shall be required to contribute one pound to the Incidental Fund, and, in the event of his declining to pay such fine within one month, he may be suspended, at the discretion of the Synod.

(2.) On the same principles, and for the same reasons, every session in our Church is required to send an elder on the part of the congregation, so that the laity, who, in our Church courts, have a co-ordinate authority with the ministers, may be duly represented.

In the event of no sufficient explanation being given for the absence of an elder, the Session and committee of said congregation shall be required to hand one pound to the treasurer of the Incidental Fund.

23. The Synod shall hold a meeting each year, commencing upon the third Tuesday of July, at 12 o'clock, noon; but it may meet more frequently in case of urgent business, if summoned by the Moderator, with the sanction of the Fixed Committee.

24. All the business brought before the Synod having been decided upon, the proceedings are concluded by prayer and benediction.

Form of Proceeding in Cases of Alleged Misconduct, and in the Infliction or Removal of Church Censures.

SECT. 1.—*General Principles.*

1. The laws of civil society extend only to the comfort of men in their ordinary social capacity, and the authority of these laws is supported by temporal power; but ministers and other church officers may sometimes be guilty of offences, which, although they would not subject them to the penalties of the civil law, might seriously impair their usefulness, or even disqualify them for holding office in the Church of Christ. In order, therefore, to preserve, as far as possible, the purity, the moral respectability, and the salutary influence of our Church-officers, it is proper that cognizance should be taken of their conduct, and rules laid down for the due investigation of any offences with which they may be charged, and, in the event of proved impropriety, for the inflicting of adequate censure or punishment.

2. There are three courts before which the alleged misconduct of Church-officers may be investigated: namely, the Session, the Presbytery, and the Synod.

3. To the Session belongs, primarily, the power of inquiring into reports or charges against any one of its own lay members; and, in the event of proof being given of conduct unworthy of his office, they may admonish, suspend, or remove him from the eldership. Should either the accuser, or the accused, feel dissatisfied by the decision of the Session, he shall have the privilege of appealing to the first meeting of the Presbytery.

4. To the Presbytery belongs the power of investigating the grounds of all appeals from Sessions ; and likewise all reports and charges, in relation to the alleged neglects or misconduct of ministers. In case of appeal, the Presbytery may confirm, modify, or reverse the decision of the Session ; and, in relation to the alleged misconduct of ministers, they may acquit, admonish, suspend, or degrade, according to the nature of the charges preferred, and the evidence adduced in support of them. An appeal to Synod may be brought against the decision of a Presbytery, by the accuser, if sanctioned by two ministers, or one minister and an elder ; by the accused ; or by a minority of the court, not less than two members.

5. To the Synod belongs the power of investigating all appeals from Presbyteries, and all reports and charges against ministers which Presbyteries may have refused to entertain. Should circumstances seem to render it advisable, the Synod may appoint a committee consisting of an equal number of ministers and lay elders, to investigate and finally decide the question at issue.

6. Complaints cognizable by an inferior court, shall, in no case, come before a superior judicatory, except after reference or appeal, or the refusal of the inferior tribunal to entertain it ; but cases of misconduct on the part of any member of any judicatory during its sitting, shall, if possible, be immediately tried by the said judicatory.

7. In receiving accusations, conducting processes, and inflicting censures, ecclesiastical judicatories should avoid the unnecessary divulging of offences, lest the spreading of scandal should enrage the guilty, grieve the virtuous, and dishonour religion. Members so guilty of unnecessarily divulging offences should be admonished or rebuked by the judicatory to which they belong.

8. Misconduct may come under cognizance from "*fama clamosa publica et frequens*," complaint, reference, or appeal.

9. With regard to every matter of alleged misconduct coming before a judicatory, there are three principal points to which the attention of the members should be directed :—

What may be in the matter, for proceeding.

What may be in the matter, against proceeding.

The manner of proceeding.

To warrant a judicatory to enter upon any question of discipline, they should be fully aware—

Of their right to judge :

Of the regularity of their proceedings :

Of the reality of the scandal :

Of the probability of the proof :

Of the injury the Church is sustaining from rumours in the case :

Of the public nature of the charge, before they subject it to open investigation.

10. Against proceeding there may arise valid objections from jurisdiction, as when a matter is brought before a Session that should come under the cognizance of the Presbytery, or when a matter is brought at first to the Presbytery, that should previously have been tried before the Session.

11. Objections may arise from irregularity of proceeding, as when due notice has not been afforded to the accused, of the charge, of the time and place of trial, or of the witnesses ; or when, in case of appeal, sufficient notice has not been given.

12. Objections may arise from the nature of the charge ; for though every scandal implies offence, yet every offence is not necessarily scandalous. As even the best men are liable, through infirmity, to fall into trifling offences, nothing should be admitted as cause of inquiry, except what is decidedly calculated to bring discredit upon office-bearers in the Church.

13. Sufficient objection against proceeding may arise from manifest want of evidence to prove the truth of any charge, inasmuch as no one should be subjected to the odium of being publicly accused and tried, without strong grounds for believing that misconduct may be proved against him.

14. No complaint of any private or personal nature should ever be entertained, until the rule, (Matt. xviii. 15, 17,) shall have been previously complied with.

15. Though irregularity of proceeding form a sufficient bar against any immediate steps in charges of misconduct, it is by no means to be considered as for ever shutting the door against investigation. In such cases, it is the duty of judicatories to instruct the complainant in the regular mode of proceeding to trial, so that the salutary laws of the Church may not serve as a screen to the offending, but solely as convenient and useful guides to the investigation of truth.

SECT. 2.—*Fama Clamosa.*

1. When a matter of misconduct comes before a judicatory, by *fama clamosa*, or public and notorious report, previously to trial it should be fully ascertained—

That the charge is in some degree, at least, credited by the religious world, and not merely a slander of those who take up evil reports against their neighbours :

That it is affording grounds of serious reproach against the Church ; or that, if the charge be not investigated, the character of the judicatory will be involved.

2. A judicatory having, on the foregoing principles, determined that investigation is requisite,—the first step to be taken is to ascertain the names of some of the most credible persons, from whom the report has been heard.

3. When any ordinary office-bearer of a Church is reported to be guilty of an offence, calculated to bring disgrace upon a particular congregation, or upon the Church at large, let the minister, or an elder specially appointed by the Session, seek a friendly interview with the party, and endeavour to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the rumour ; and should the report clearly appear to be unfounded, the most efficacious means should be immediately taken to counteract the injury. Should the report, however, appear to be well founded, judicious steps ought to be taken to bring the offender to a fitting sense of his misconduct.

4. Should friendly converse and admonition fail to produce amendment, it becomes the duty of the Session to call the offender before them ; and to admonish, rebuke, or suspend the offending party from his office, as the particular circumstances of the case may seem to demand.

5. If a *fama clamosa* have gone forth, injurious to the character of a minister, in relation to misconduct connected with his deportment and duties in his own congregation, the Presbytery should try, by a brotherly conference, to remove the ground of scandal. If in this they do not succeed, then it will be necessary to prepare an appropriate form of questions, to hold a *pro re nata* visitation, and to examine, by solemn adjuration, the elders and commissioners of the congregation, on the subject of the alleged offence or offences.

Should the alleged offence, however, be of an aggravated character, whether in connexion with his own congregation or otherwise, and should the rumour have become notorious, private conference should, in no case, supersede public trial.

6. If a judicatory or person accused by *fama clamosa*, be able to trace any of the original propagators of a scandalous report, the judicatory of their own choice may, and at the request of the accused are bound to, summon the propagator or propagators of the scandal to give evidence, and if such propagator or propagators do not appear and sustain the charge, they shall be treated as calumniators.

SECT. 3.—*Complaints.*

1. When a charge comes forward by complaint of one or more persons, the business of the judicatory is to take care that the complainant or complainants be duly informed that the judicatory cannot proceed, unless he or they profess their readiness to substantiate the charge upon solemn adjuration.

2. When the charge is of such a nature, that the time and place of the alleged offence might be specified, the judicatory shall take care that these circumstances be duly described, so that the accused may have opportunity of defending himself by proving an *alibi*, if such proof he have, or otherwise of disproving the accusation, or of extenuating his offence.

3. To prevent, as far as may be, the bringing forward of unfounded charges, complainants are to be clearly informed, that, should the accusation prove false, and the accuser appear to have acted from mere levity, or from malicious motives, the accuser shall be dealt with as a calumniator; and shall be liable, so far as the case will admit, to the same degree of censure to which the charge, if proved, would have subjected the accused.

4. The withdrawal of an accuser, or of an accusation, in case of alleged misconduct, will not warrant the judicatory in desisting from inquiry. On the contrary, they shall proceed as in case of *fama clamosa*, and summon the accuser as a witness, if they see cause.

5. If any office-bearer of the Church apply to the Moderator of a Session, or of a Presbytery, complaining of injury sustained, or

praying the investigation of a *fama clamosa*, injurious to complainant's reputation, the Moderator shall, if he see cause, call a meeting of the judicatory, and direct complainant to appear before it; but the Moderator shall not, of his own authority, issue any summons, or direct any further proceedings.

6. When a complaint warranting investigation has been duly lodged before any court, it may be immediately investigated by consent of parties; but, if either party object to such summary proceeding, the accused shall receive ten days' notice of trial, and be furnished, at least five clear days before the day of trial, with the names and residences of the witnesses who are to appear against him; and, likewise, with a distinct outline of the evidence which said witnesses are expected to give.

7. At the request of any party, or the motion of any member of judicatory, summonses shall be issued by the Moderator, requiring the attendance of parties or of witnesses.

The form of summons shall run thus:—

“To A. B.,

“You are hereby earnestly requested to attend a meeting of the _____ of _____, to be held at _____, upon the _____, at the hour of _____ o'clock, then and there to give testimony, as far as you know, concerning an accusation of _____, against _____, [or, in a case between _____, of _____, and _____, of _____].

“C. D., Moderator.”

8. In the case of sickness of a witness, or distance of residence, any judicatory may grant a Commission to certain of their members, to examine said witness, and report.

Said Commissioners shall publicly and solemnly promise fidelity. The choice of one of the Commissioners shall be with the accused. The accused shall have the right of being present at the examination, and, with the sanction of the Moderator, of putting such questions as he may deem proper for his own vindication.

9. Should the accused person refuse to attend the meeting appointed for the investigation of the charge preferred against him, he shall be cited a second time; and, in the event of again refusing, he shall be subjected to the same penalty, which would be awarded against him if the charge were established.

10. Before witnesses be solemnly adjured, the accused shall have the right of submitting his objections against them, and should his objections be sustained, the witnesses shall be dismissed, and, so far as their evidence was concerned, the process shall terminate.

11. Complainants are to be held competent witnesses; but the evidence of an interested witness, if unsupported by strong circumstances, or other testimony, shall not be considered decisive.

12. Before proceeding to examine witnesses for the accusation, the accused shall have the right to put in his plea of justification, if it is to be supported by witnesses; and if the judicatory shall find the plea relevant,—as that of *alibi*, in case of a crime charged with time and place,—they shall first hear evidence for justification, and if it be found sufficient, they shall terminate the process.

13. The witness shall be adjured by the Moderator or President of the court, as follows, viz:—

“A. B., I adjure thee by the living God, in whose sacred presence you now stand, and before whose awful judgment-seat you must hereafter appear, that you tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning the present charge against C. D. [or the present affair between C. D. and E. F.]”

Or, speaking after the Moderator, the witness shall say—

“I, A. B., do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning the present accusation against C. D., [or the present affair between C. D. and E. F.,] as I shall answer to the Great Judge of the quick and the dead, at the last day.”

After either form, the witness, following the Moderator, shall add—

“I, A. B., being called as a witness upon the present trial, do solemnly affirm, as I shall answer to God, that I am free from all malice against C. D., and that I have not received, nor do I expect to receive, nor, to the best of my knowledge and belief, has any one received, nor does any one expect to receive, any reward, to influence me to give false or partial evidence.”

14. It may happen, in the course of trial, that some circumstances may be given in evidence which persons then attending as hearers, and not as witnesses, may be able to enforce, explain, or contradict. Should either party wish to bring forward such person or persons

as a witness or witnesses, they may apply to the judicatory for leave to produce them. In such cases the court shall proceed as follows:—

(1.) They shall order alleged witnesses to retire. (2.) They shall inquire into what point of evidence witness is to be called for, and shall be convinced of its relevancy before he be admitted. (3.) They shall examine, by solemn adjuration, the party producing said witness, to the following effect:—

(1.) “Did you before the date of your list of witnesses, know that A. B., whom you now wish to produce as a witness, could give any evidence in this case?” (2.) “Do you believe his evidence to be important to your cause?”

15. All questions to witnesses shall be put with the sanction of the Moderator.

16. The party accusing or accused shall have the right of examining or cross-examining witnesses, prior to any member of the judicatory.

17. When Commissioners appear in support of any cause, no more than one Commissioner from any party shall be allowed to question witnesses. The choice of the interrogator lies with his colleagues. If they decline to nominate an interrogator, the nomination devolves upon the judicatory.

18. The Moderator shall prevent leading questions from being put, on direct examination.

19. No person, under pain of immediate censure, shall comment upon evidence, till the examination of witnesses shall have closed.

20. A member, having ceased to interrogate a witness, shall not be permitted to put any new question, till every other member shall have declined questioning.

21. Members of Sessions and Presbyteries, in cases of trials, shall be called *seriatim*, to declare their opinions.

22. Every trial shall be in open court; but in case of any evidence coming forward that might be indecent, or injurious to public decorum, so much of the trial as relates to said evidence, may be held by the court in private, the witness, the accuser, and the accused only being admitted.

23. A witness having been examined, his evidence shall be read over to him. The Moderator shall then ask him—“Is that your

evidence?" "Have you anything to add?" Witness and clerk shall then certify the accuracy of the evidence.

24. Examination of witnesses being ended, the accuser and the accused shall then be asked if they have anything to add. If they choose to speak, the accuser shall be heard first, then the accused in reply. These parties shall then be ordered to withdraw, and directed to remain in attendance, and the judicatory shall proceed judicially to consider the case.

25. In all cases where it is possible, Sessions and Presbyteries shall pass sentence. When they cannot come to a decision, the case may be referred to the higher court.

26. Whether the court have passed sentence, or determined to refer the cause to a higher judicatory, the parties shall again be called in, and the determination of the court announced.

27. In case of sentence having been pronounced by a Session or Presbytery, the Moderator shall explain to the party affected, the right and rules of appeal.

SECT. 4.—*Complaints against Ministers.*

1. As a minister is an important officer in the Church, and as much of the success of his ministry depends upon his character, accusations against him are not lightly to be taken up, carelessly inquired into, nor, if substantiated, to be slightly censured or punished.

2. A Presbytery should, therefore, not receive an accusation against a minister, nor, except in case of *fama clamosa et frequens*, commence any process against him, until some one or more give in an accusation against him in writing, and also give a distinct pledge to support it by evidence. Should such pledge not be fulfilled, the accuser shall be subjected to adequate censure.

3. Against a minister an accusation shall not be sustained, unless supported by more than one witness, or by one witness, and some corroborative circumstances; but should two accusations, referring to similar crimes, each supported by one witness, be produced, the Presbytery may, in this case, proceed as if two evidences were offered to one accusation.

SECT. 5.—*Reference.*

1. If a Session decline coming to a decision, on account of the grave nature of the charge, or the difficulty of the investigation, and refer the matter to their Presbytery, the minister and elder of the referring Session shall have the right of voting.

2. When a Presbytery decline coming to a decision, and therefore refer the cause to the Synod, they shall be heard in explanation, and their members individually shall have a right to join in deliberating and passing sentence.

3. In case of reference, the judicatory referring shall produce, before the court referred to, an authenticated copy of their proceedings, together with the reason of reference.

SECT. 6.—*Appeals.*

1. Appeals are from a Session to a Presbytery, or from a Presbytery to the Synod.

2. When verbal notice of appeal is given, the appellant is to be informed that he must give to the Moderator a written notice of appeal within ten days of the time of passing the sentence of which he complains ; but if, within said ten days, the appeal be not lodged, the sentence shall stand.

3. When merely verbal notice of appeal is given at the time of passing sentence, it becomes the duty of the Moderator, upon receiving, in due time, the written notice of appeal, to authenticate it by his signature, and to direct the appellant to have it delivered to the opposite party, ten clear days before the time appointed for the consideration of said appeal. Summonses shall be granted to either, or both the parties, if required.

4. If, at the time of passing sentence, notice of appeal be given in writing, and the party appealing do publicly pledge himself to support his appeal, no further notice is required to be given to the opposite party, but summonses shall be granted to either party, if required.

5. When notice of appeal is regularly given, execution of the sentence shall be stayed till the appeal be decided on by the higher court, except in cases of suspension or degradation from the ministerial office.

6. In the trying of appeals there are three points to be considered : 1st. Ground of appeal. 2nd. Conduct of the appellant. 3rd. Sentence on the conduct of the judicatory against which the appeal is made.

7. There are three grounds upon which an appeal may be substantiated :—

Informality in the proceedings of the lower judicatory :

Inadequacy of the sentence pronounced to the charge proved :

Injustice to the appellant.

8. If the appeal be found wanting in these necessary principles, the judicatory, if they see cause, may censure the appellant for contumacy toward the judicatory against whose sentence he has appealed.

9. Provided the appeal be judged to possess one or more of these grounds, the cause may be proceeded with immediately, or referred to a Commission of the superior judicatory.

10. Provided the judicatory determine to proceed immediately, they shall in no case hear new evidence, other than what is, or ought to have been contained in the minutes of trial before the inferior court, until they shall have passed sentence on the judicatory against whose determination the appeal has been entered. The judicatory may then proceed to hear whatever new circumstances or evidence can be produced, (provided the party appealed against shall have received ten clear days' notice of such new circumstances or evidence,) and, afterwards, confirm, modify, or reverse the sentence.

11. In case of appeal, the members of the inferior judicatory may attend and explain or defend their conduct, but no member of the court appealed against shall be allowed to join in passing sentence.

12. If the case be referred to a Commission, the inferior court may attend and explain their conduct. A Commission may pass final sentence, or report, according to the powers conferred upon them.

SECT. 7.—*Sentences.*

1. When a person has been found guilty, he shall, according to the degree of his offence, and the nature of his office, be admonished, rebuked, suspended, or deposed. Deposition and suspension, however, can only be applied to ministers, lay elders, or precentors.

2. Sentence having been passed, the same charge, whether it may have arisen from *fama clamosa*, or complaint, shall not be re-investigated by the same judicatory which pronounced the sentence.

3. Should the sentence have been suspension *sine die*, the person suspended shall not be restored without satisfactory evidence of sincere repentance, and strong grounds of hope that the amendment will be permanent.

4. A minister found guilty of any gross offence, such as fornication, adultery, repeated intemperance, or contumacy against the discipline of the Church, shall be suspended *sine die*.

5. In suspending a minister the sentence shall run thus :—

“Whereas, it has been found before the Presbytery of ———, met ———, that A. B., minister of ———, has been guilty of ———, we the Presbytery of ———, do suspend him from exercising the functions of the Christian ministry, or any part thereof, *sine die*; or, until the next meeting of this Presbytery, which shall be upon the ——— of ———”

6. When a minister has been suspended *sine die*, the congregation, if sanctioned by his Presbytery, and no appeal be lodged to Synod, is at liberty to choose a successor.

7. Suspension *sine die*, shall be considered as suspension *ab officio et beneficio*; but during a limited suspension, the person suspended shall pay the supplies of the congregation.

8. When a Session and Committee find it necessary to inflict the sentence of suspension upon the precentor, or upon a member of their own body, it becomes their duty to summon the offender before them, and, if he appear, the Moderator shall address the guilty party to the following effect :—

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we, the Session and Committee of ———, having found you ———, to be guilty of ———, do hereby declare our judgment that you be suspended from the office of the eldership, [or of a member of Committee, or from the office of precentor,] till you satisfy us of your repentance for the fault of which you have been guilty.”

Should the offender decline to appear, the cause of censure is to be declared by the Moderator, and the sentence passed as if he were present.

9. Should evidence of sincere and permanent repentance afterwards

appear, the Session and Committee may restore the person suspended, to his office, as precentor or elder, or member of Committee.

10. If, in the conduct of a court appealed from, anything culpable appear, they may be admonished, rebuked, or otherwise dealt with, as the nature of the case may require.

11. The main object of church censure being the reformation of offenders, and the exhibition of an example, to deter others from the commission of crime, it will therefore follow as a salutary rule in the passing of sentences upon judicatories, that, if they be guilty of offences against the morals or rights of the people, their punishment shall be in presence of the people ; but that, where the offences of judicatories tend rather to violate ecclesiastical order, than to injure the morals, or trench upon the rights of the people, the censure inflicted, in the case of first offences, at least, shall be only in the presence of the judicatory offending.

12. Inferior judicatories, when sentence is passed against them, have a right to enter reasons of protest ; but the superior judicatory in such case have a right, by way of replication, to place upon record the grounds of their decision.

DIRECTORY FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP,

AND OTHER

RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND DUTIES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE obligations to worship and serve Almighty God arise from his perfections and government,—the capacities with which he has endowed us,—the relations in which we stand to him,—the blessings he has bestowed upon us,—and his own express command delivered in his Word.

God, having created man with social feelings and capacities, and revealed himself as the common Father of the great human family, requires of all his children to render unto him, not only individual, but also social worship ; directs them in the manner in which it is to be offered, and encourages them by his promises, to engage in its performance.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE LORD'S-DAY.

CHAPTER I.

GOD commanded the Jews to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”. (Exod. xx. 8.) He gave them directions “not to do their own ways, not find their own pleasures, nor speak their own words,” on the day he had chosen as his own. (Isaiah lviii. 13.) We, as Christians, do not recognise the authority of the Jewish Sabbath ;

but the apostles and early Christians having held religious worship and services on the first day of the week, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, we cheerfully recognise that day, as the special day of rest and worship for all Christian people.

It is the duty of all persons so to regulate their worldly business that there be no hindrance to the duties of the Lord's-day. The entire day should be kept holy, and a due portion of it devoted to the exercises of public and private worship.

Such arrangements should be made in families that servants or others be not unnecessarily detained from the public worship of God, nor deprived of opportunities of reading the Scriptures.

All persons should begin the day with private prayer; and members of families should join in family worship, returning thanks to the Father of Lights, who has brought them to the beginning of another week, seeking his guidance, and imploring his blessing upon themselves, and the public ministrations of religion.

We are warned "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." All should, therefore, repair to public worship; and heads of families should, as far as possible, take care that none under their charge absent themselves from the house of God.

The people should be careful to assemble at the appointed time, that, being all present at the beginning, they may unite with one heart in all the parts of public worship.

Should the lot of Christians be cast in places where they have not opportunities of attending public worship, let them be careful to make such arrangements in their own houses, or in conjunction with other families in their vicinity, that the Scriptures be read, social prayer be offered up, and the remembrance of the Lord's-day, and their Christian duties, be preserved in their habitations.

CHAPTER II.

Acts of Worship, and Public Religious Exercises to be observed on the Lord's-day.

The ordinary public services of the Lord's-day are singing the praises of God, prayer, reading the Scriptures, preaching the Word,

making collections for the poor, and dismissing the people with the benediction. The only stated occasional service is the administration of the Lord's Supper. Baptism, however, may also be suitably administered before the assembled congregation.

These services may be arranged by each congregation and its Session, with the approbation of the Presbytery, in such a manner as may be considered most conducive for edification.

SECT. 1.—*Singing of Psalms and Hymns.*

It is the duty of Christians to praise God, by singing psalms or hymns in their congregations and in their families. We are enjoined to "sing unto the Lord, bless his name, and show forth his salvation from day to day;" (Ps. xcvi. 2.) to "sing forth the honour of his name, and make his praise glorious." (Ps. lxvi. 2.)

In praising God, we are to sing with the spirit, and with the understanding, also, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. It is earnestly recommended that the people practise sacred music, so that they may be able to praise God in a becoming manner, with their voices as well as with their hearts.

The whole congregation should be furnished with psalm-books, and ought to join in this part of worship. The time to be spent in singing is left to the judgment of every minister.

SECT. 2.—*Reading of the Holy Scriptures.*

The reading of the Holy Scriptures in the congregation is a part of the public service of God, and ought to be performed by the minister.

It is left to the discretion of every minister to read such a portion of Scripture as he may consider expedient; but it is advisable that on each Lord's-day there be read, at least, one chapter in the Old, and another in the New Testament. People should be provided with copies of the Scriptures, bring them to public worship, and follow the minister in his public reading.

SECT. 3.—*Public Prayer before Sermon.*

Before sermon there should be a general and comprehensive

prayer. First, humbly acknowledging the infinite majesty of God, and glorifying his perfections, as they are made known to us in the works of creation, in the dispensations of providence, and in the clear and full revelation he has given us in his written Word. Secondly, praising him for his goodness and for all his mighty acts ; above all, for Jesus Christ, his unspeakable gift,—for the means of grace and the hope of glory. Thirdly, deploring the sinfulness of man, acknowledging, with deep contrition, the evil of every sin against God, our neighbours, and ourselves. We are, also, to confess and mourn over the aggravations of our sins, from their being committed against the warning of God's Word, and the admonitions of our consciences, from the neglect of the most solemn obligations. Fourthly, making earnest supplication for the pardon of sin through Jesus Christ, and for peace with God, for the quickening, renewing, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to discharge our duty, and to resist temptation. We are required, also, to pray for the temporal mercies which God has in his power to bestow, for support and comfort in our passage through life, for his special superintendence and blessing in the work of the sanctuary, and his acceptance of our persons and services, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SECT. 4.—*Preaching.*

Preaching is an institution of God for the benefit of men. Great attention should, therefore, be paid to the manner in which it is performed. Every minister should give diligent application to it, and endeavour to prove himself “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the word of truth.”

The subject of a sermon should be some verse or verses of Scripture; and its object should be to explain, defend, or apply some doctrinal truth; or to point out the nature, and urge the practice, of some Christian duty. It is also necessary, that, frequently, considerable portions of Scripture be expounded. Where there are two services in the day, it is proper that one of them be thus employed; and where there is but one public service, the minister should teach and expound on alternate Sabbaths.

Preaching is a work which requires much study, attention, labour, and prayer. Ministers ought to prepare their sermons with care,

and not serve God with that which cost them nought. They ought, however, to keep to the simplicity of the Gospel, expressing themselves in language agreeable to Scripture, and comprehensible by all their hearers.

SECT. 5.—*Prayer after Sermon.*

The concluding prayer ought generally to have relation to the subject that has been treated of. In it the minister may give thanks for the great love of God in sending his Son into the world to seek and to save that which was lost ; for the communication of his Holy Spirit ; for the light, and liberty, and privileges, and hopes of the glorious Gospel ; for the revival and increase of religion ; for the goodness of God in delivering the land from antichristian darkness ; and for the privilege we enjoy of worshipping him without fear, as our consciences direct us. The minister may then pray for the extension of the gospel in purity and power, and that the word preached may abide in the heart, and bring forth fruit abundantly in the life and conversation of those who hear it.

The part of prayer which is called intercession, though it may be used at whatever time ministers may think expedient, has more generally been introduced in the prayer before the conclusion of the services.

When this order is judged advisable, the minister will pray for the Church universal ; for the religious society with which he is connected ; for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, and the restoration of God's ancient people, the Jews ; for the Queen and the members of the Royal Family ; for the High Court of Parliament, when it may be assembled ; for the Queen's counsellors and the magistrates of the land ; for all the ministers of the everlasting Gospel ; for the rising generation ; for seminaries of learning ; for the poor, the afflicted, and such other persons as may request his prayers in the place, or among the people where he ministers.

It is easy to observe that in the directions for prayer there is great compass and variety. It is committed to the judgment and fidelity of the officiating pastor to direct his attention to appropriate topics, and to take in more or less of the several parts, according to his own views of what will be most edifying. But, although ministers should

not be confined to set or fixed forms of prayer in public worship, yet it is the indispensable duty of every minister, previously to his entering on his office, to prepare and qualify himself for this part of his duty, as well as for preaching. He ought, by a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, by reading the best writers on devotion, by meditation, and by a life of communion with God in secret, to labour to acquire facility and power in prayer. When about to engage in the public services of religion, he should endeavour to compose his mind, and seek assistance from God to direct his thoughts, that public prayer may be offered with solemnity, propriety, and acceptance.

SECT 6.—*Administration of Baptism.*

Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Christ, to be administered to all who profess their faith in him, or the infants of those who are members of his Church; "Go," said he, "teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Scriptures declare, that "the promise is unto us, and unto our children." Our Lord has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed, nor to be administered, in any case, by any but an ordained minister.

This ordinance may be administered in the presence of the congregation, or in private houses. The child to be baptized is to be presented by one, or, if possible, both of the parents. In extraordinary cases, the child may be presented by some Christian friend.

Before the administration of this ordinance, the minister is to use some words of instruction respecting the institution, the nature, use, and ends of baptism, shewing—That it was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; that children by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible Church; that though baptism is a Christian ordinance, it is not so necessary, that through the want thereof, an infant dying unbaptized perishes everlastingly; or that the parents are guilty, if they have not contemned or neglected the ordinance, when and where it might have been obtained.

The minister is then to exhort the parents to perform their duty to the child committed to their trust; requiring that they teach the

child to read the Word of God; that they instruct it in the principles of our holy religion, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; that they teach their child to pray, and that they pray with and for it; that they set before it an example of piety and godliness, and endeavour by all the means of God's appointment, to bring it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The minister is then to pray for a blessing to attend the ordinance. The parent shall then present the child, calling it by its name. The minister shall say, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize with water, by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony. The service is then to be concluded with prayer.

SECT. 7.—*Administration of the Lord's Supper.*

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in the public congregation, as frequently as ministers and sessions may deem advisable.

It is proper that public notice should be given to the congregation, four Lord's-days before the administration of this ordinance; that the minister should instruct the people respecting its nature and design, and point out the dispositions required, and the preparation that should be made, in order to communicate in an acceptable manner. Persons approaching for the first time, are to be examined and instructed before they be admitted.

The number of examinations must, in a great degree, be left to the discretion of ministers and sessions; but should never be hurried over in a careless, superficial manner.

On the day appointed for the administration of the ordinance, after a suitable sermon, the congregation sing an appropriate psalm; the minister shall then offer up prayer to God, for his presence, protection, and blessing. He shall then read an account of the institution from one of the evangelists, or the 11th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians; he is to show that this is an ordinance of perpetual observance instituted by Christ; the obligations we are under to observe it; explain and enforce the use of the bread and wine, as memorials of our Saviour's body and blood shed, and of the benefits

we enjoy through his sufferings and death, and the danger of unworthily partaking, the culpability of neglect, and the advantages arising to believers from observing the ordinance in a proper manner.

Next, the minister is, in the name of Christ, to warn the profane, the ignorant, and those that indulge themselves in any known sin, not to approach the table of the Lord. On the other hand, he shall invite to this feast such as are sensible of their sinfulness, and are constrained by the love of Christ to turn from the evil of their ways, to serve the living God. The minister shall then come down from the pulpit, and, the communicants being seated around the tables, he shall briefly endeavour to stir up their hearts to gratitude and love; and then, after Christ's example, offer thanks, and implore the blessing of God upon himself, his assistants, and the people.

The minister is now to take the bread, and break it in the view of the people, saying in the manner following:—

“According to the institution, command, and example of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I take this bread, break it, and give it unto you in remembrance of his body, which was broken for you.”

He shall then take the cup, and distribute it, saying, “According to the institution, command, and example, of our Lord Jesus Christ, I take this cup, and give it unto you: ‘This cup is the new testament in Christ's blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins, drink ye all of it; and as often,’” &c.

The minister may then communicate, if no other minister be present. He is then to address the communicants. The communicants leave the table, singing a psalm to the praise of God.

After all have communicated, the minister is to close the service with a concluding address, thanksgiving, and prayer.

SECT. 8.—*Secret and Family Worship.*

Besides the public worship in congregations, it is the indispensable duty of every person in secret, and of every family by itself in private to worship God.

Secret worship is plainly enjoined in Scripture. Every one, apart by himself, is to spend some time in reading the Scriptures, in meditation, in self-examination, and prayer.

Family worship ought to be observed, ordinarily, every morning and evening, and consists in reading a portion of Scripture, singing praises, and in prayer.

Heads of families ought to take care, that all their household attend, and engage in the service.

SECT. 9.—*Religious Meetings in Particular Districts.*

Where churches may not be planted, or Christians have their lot cast in places where they have not public worship, or where a number of persons may consider it to be conducive to their spiritual improvement, meetings for religious purposes may be established. Let the elder of the district, or some other suitable person, conduct the religious services on these occasions, opening the meeting with singing the praises of God ; then reading a portion of the Old, and another of the New Testament ; after that, engaging in prayer, and in such other services as may be deemed appropriate. In places where Christians may be altogether, or in a great measure, deprived of the public services of a minister of the Gospel, it is recommended that prayer meetings be held on Sabbath-days, and that a portion of time on such occasions be devoted to the instruction of youth.

SECT. 10.—*Solemnization of Marriage.*

Marriage is a solemn contract between one man and one woman, instituted by God, sanctioned and acknowledged by the laws of every civil society.

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman only, and they are not to be within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity. When one or both of the parties are under age, the consent of parents must be obtained, as required by the Act for Regulating Marriages in Ireland ; with the provisions of which Act, Ministers are requested to make themselves familiar.

Parents ought neither to compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons.

It is recommended, that no Minister celebrate marriage on the

Lord's-day, nor in any case, unless two witnesses, as required by law, are present.

Before marriage, the parties are to be solemnly adjured, and respectively called on to declare, that neither of them knows any cause arising from pre-engagement, &c., forbidding them to be joined in marriage.

In celebrating marriage, the minister is to commence with praying to this effect,—acknowledging our dependence on God for all his mercies, and that it is our duty to seek his direction and blessing on all occasions ; praising him for the happiness we derive from friendship, and the endearing relations of social life ; thanking him for the institution of marriage, and the directions he has given us in his word respecting the duties of husbands and wives ; and that he should bless the instructions about to be offered, to the use of the parties proposing to be joined in marriage.

The minister is then to give them some instruction from the Scriptures, respecting the institution of marriage, and the duties of the married ; showing,—

That God has instituted marriage for promoting his own glory, the good of society, and the happiness of man ; that marriage is honourable in all ; that there are various duties incumbent on those who enter into this relation, such as a high esteem and love for one another, faithfulness and fidelity—from the husband, protection ; from the wife, obedience in the Lord,—bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses, encouraging each other under the various trials of life, comforting each other in sickness, providing in honesty and industry for each other's temporal support, encouraging and strengthening each other in serving God.

Then the minister shall cause the man and the woman to join their hands ; and shall pronounce the marriage covenant first to the man, in these words :—

“ You take this woman, whom you hold by the hand, to be your lawful married wife ; and you solemnly promise, in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will be unto her a faithful and a loving husband, until God shall separate you by death.”

The man shall then express his consent. The minister shall then address himself to the woman in these words :—

“ You take this man, whom you hold by the hand, to be your law-

ful married husband ; and you solemnly promise, in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will be unto him a faithful, loving, and dutiful wife, until God shall separate you by death."

The woman shall then express her consent.

The minister is then to say, "I pronounce you to be husband and wife ; whom, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

The minister is then to conclude the service with prayer.

SECT. 11.—*Parochial Visitations.*

A minister, when ordained, should visit all the families of his congregation as soon as possible ; and at least within the space of a year from his ordination. He should continue to visit his congregation once in each succeeding year of his ministry. The object of such visitations, is to inquire into the state of families and individuals under his pastoral care.

Every minister is to keep a registry of families, and of the names and ages of their members. In his visitations, the minister is to admonish, catechise, reprove, or comfort, as circumstances may require. When he may consider it expedient, he is to pray with the family which he visits, or with a few families convened together.

When he finds any families inattentive to the duties of piety, he should show in his instructions, that even if they attend upon the public worship of the Sabbath, it will not supersede the private worship of the family. Where he finds any, who have long absented themselves from the Lord's Supper, or who, though of a sufficient age, have not yet approached, he is to exhort them by the love and command of the Saviour, to the sacramental remembrance of him. Where he finds want of brotherly kindness among neighbours, he is to endeavour to make peace ; and, in imitation of his Lord, to go about doing good.

SECT. 12.—*Visitation of the Sick.*

When persons are sick, it is their duty, before their strength and understanding fail them, to send for their minister, and to make known to him, with prudence, their spiritual state. It is his duty to

visit them so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will admit ; and to apply himself with all tenderness and love, to administer spiritual good to their immortal souls.

He shall instruct the sick out of the Scriptures, that diseases arise not out of the ground, nor do they come by chance ; but that they are directed and sent by a wise and holy God, either for our correction and amendment, for the trial and exercise of our graces, or for other important ends ; and that they shall work together for good, to all those who make a wise improvement of God's visitation, neither despising his chastening hand, nor fainting under his rebukes.

If the sick person appear to be ignorant, he shall examine him, and endeavour to instruct him in the great principles of religion. He shall exhort the sick to examine himself ; to search his heart, and try his former ways by the word of God ; and shall assist him by mentioning some of the obvious marks and evidences of sincere piety.

If the sick shall signify any scruple, doubt, or temptation under which he may labour, the minister must endeavour to resolve his doubts, and administer instruction and direction, as the case may require. But if the sick appear to be a stupid, thoughtless, hardened sinner, he shall endeavour to awaken his mind, to rouse his conscience, to convince him of the evil and danger of sin, to bring him to an humble, penitential sense of his iniquities, and the absolute necessity of faith and repentance. If, on the other hand, the sick be cast down under a sense of sin, and apprehension of approaching wrath, he is to set before him the freeness and riches of the grace of God, and the cheering promises of the Gospel. Thus the minister is, on the one hand, to guard the sick person against ill-grounded expectations of the mercy of God ; on the other, against unreasonable fears, and desponding discouragements.

The minister shall admonish the sick, if necessary, to set his house in order ; to make restitution or satisfaction, if he have done any wrong ; to be reconciled to those with whom he may have been at variance ; and to forgive all men their trespasses against him.

He may employ the present occasion to exhort those about the sick person to consider their mortality ; to seek the Lord while he may be found ; to make timely preparation for sickness, and death, and judgment ; to have their loins girded, and their lamps burning, and be as men waiting for the coming of their Lord.

The minister is then to pray with and for the sick, as the nature of his situation shall appear to require.

SECT. 13.—*Burial of the Dead.*

When any person departs this life, let the corpse be taken care of in a decent manner ; and let the living, with seriousness, lay the subject of death to their hearts.

The practice of assembling at wakes, and of serving out refreshments on those occasions, or at funerals, is very inconsistent with the solemnity that should reign in the house of mourning, and should therefore be discouraged by ministers and sessions.

When the dead body has been kept a proper time, let it be decently attended to the place appointed for public burial.

Ministers are recommended to have a suitable religious service on such occasions, which may consist of singing, prayer, and a funeral address, in the house of mourning, in a meeting-house, or at the grave.





